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WORLD-POLITICS.

LONDON: ST. PETERSBURG: ROME: WASHINGTON.

LONDON, *May, 1905.*

THAT a country may be aristocratic in its society and Radical and even Socialistic in its politics is a paradox that has become almost a commonplace. Nor does its converse hold any the less good. A country may be an unmitigated Democracy in its social standards and its social atmosphere, and yet display in the conduct of its public affairs a spirit of Conservatism not far removed from Toryism. Great Britain is an example of the former type of nation and the United States of the latter; and it is not a little curious that, at the very moment when the Supreme Court dealt its smashing blow at the legislative regulation of hours of labor, the English Parliament should be taking a gigantic stride towards the Socialist ideal. I refer particularly to the Unemployed Bill, which is only one of several recent incidents that show the growing power of Labor in our politics and the increasing absorption of Parliament in questions of social reform.

On almost the last day of April, for instance, the Local Government Board issued a circular to the various Boards of Guardians on the subject of underfed children at the public elementary schools. A painfully large number of school children go through their daily lessons in a state of semi-starvation or actual starvation. All such cases are henceforward to be relieved by the local Boards of Guardians on the application of the child itself or of the managers and teachers of the school attended. The relief given is to be considered as a loan by the local authority to the father of the child, unless there is satisfactory proof that the cause of the child's destitution is the father's inability, not his refusal or neglect, to provide proper food. Unless such proof

can be produced the Boards of Guardians are authorized to recover from the father the cost of the food given. In all cases, before relief is afforded, the father is to be communicated with and an opportunity allowed him of providing the proper food himself. No relief is to be given for a longer period than one month; but the application can be renewed if necessary. In cases where the application is repeatedly renewed and where, nevertheless, there is reason to believe that the parent is able to provide proper food, the Guardians are advised to proceed against him under the Vagrancy Act or the Cruelty to Children Act. The relief is not to take the form of money, but of food-tickets issued upon local charities or upon shopkeepers. This part of the scheme has been a good deal criticised. No such local charity for the provision of meals may exist and orders on shopkeepers issued by the Relieving Officer are clumsy, uneconomical and liable to obvious abuse. Moreover, so long as the matter is left to the Guardians, the charge remains a parochial one, and the poorest districts, already crying out against the pressure of the rates, may be tempted to neglect their duties. On the other hand, if the charge were made an Educational one, it would be spread over the whole area of the local Education authority. But nobody, I should imagine, can believe that this scheme is likely to be final, even if the objections to it in its present form are removed. It is inevitably but a step towards the feeding of all public-school children by the State, at a cost which would be borne mainly, of course, by the parents, but partially by the community at large.

Again, the Aliens Bill was carried through its second reading on May 2d by a majority of 152. But, on reflection, I am not quite sure whether that should be quoted as an instance either of the political power of Labor or of the increasing absorption of Parliament in questions of social reform. Mr. Keir Hardie, who is the leading spirit of the Independent Labor Party, announced a few days ago his intention of opposing it in Committee. "All the facts at present," he said, "went to show that the alien question had been manufactured by a party for party purposes." This statement was made, not in the House of Commons, but before the delegates of the Independent Labor Party at their annual meeting, and by them it was warmly cheered. Mr. Hardie went on to say that, during the Committee stage of the Bill, he would move that "no Bill dealing with the alien question could be ac-

cepted as satisfactory which did not make it illegal for aliens to be brought to this country to take the place of workmen during a trade dispute, or for employers to employ aliens except at the trade-union rate of wages." I need scarcely say that there is no chance of the Committee's adopting either of Mr. Hardie's amendments, but his criticisms of the Bill are none the less interesting and pertinent. He is particularly near the mark in saying that the alien question has been manufactured by a party for party purposes. Had he said "used" instead of "manufactured," he would have been absolutely correct. There was no need to manufacture the alien question; it already exists; and in the East End of London, or at any rate in sections of it, it has led, as I endeavored to show in a previous letter, to a considerable displacement of the British population, to an intense and inhuman industrial competition, to overcrowding, "sweating," a lowering of the standards of decent living, and the influx of a number of undesirables who come upon the rates and fill the prisons. The feeling about this evil in such districts as Stepney and Whitechapel is not so very far below the intensity of Californian feeling over Chinese immigration. But one must discriminate. The alien the East-Enders object to is not so much the criminal, the pauper or the "undesirables" of both sexes, as the hard-working, sharp-witted, thrifty and ambitious competitor. But to keep him out is to keep all aliens out. It is, in effect, to say that no Russian or Polish Jew shall be permitted to land and live in England; and that is an extreme to which no British Government is ever likely to advance. The supporters of the Aliens Bill are, therefore, in a dilemma. They wish to appear as the protector of the British working-men against the competition of foreign immigrants. But the Aliens Bill which they have actually introduced is directed, not against those whose competition is really formidable, but against paupers, criminals, the diseased and the vicious—in short, against those whose capacity to compete with British labor is virtually negligible. The Bill will do nothing to prevent overcrowding or "sweating," or to soften the edge of industrial competition. I doubt, indeed, whether it will lead to the exclusion of more than a few hundred "undesirables" a year. "It is an affair," as "The Daily Chronicle" justly remarked, "of public health and police, not of economics"; and Mr. Chamberlain's attempt to trumpet it abroad as a measure for

the defence of the British working-man against underpaid labor, and to argue that its logical sequel should be a Bill to exclude the goods made by such labor in other lands, marked, I think, the lowest depths of disingenuousness to which even he has yet descended. The Bill simply makes arrangements which, while preserving England as an asylum for political refugees, aim at the exclusion of paupers and the mentally, morally and physically unfit, and at the transportation and expulsion of such aliens as may prove a burden to the rates or may be convicted of criminal offences. In other words, it touches merely the fringe of the alien question; nor am I sure that it touches even that much in a practical way or that the machinery it proposes to erect will prove adequate to its task. What, however, is indisputable is that it will do nothing to improve industrial conditions in the East End. Its supporters know that it cannot have any such result, however much they may find it politically convenient to mislead their constituents into believing that it may. On the other hand, as a measure of self-defence against the dumping of human rubbish on these islands, its purpose makes a wide appeal to the common sense of the nation and of both political parties.

But, if it is stretching a point to ascribe the Aliens Bill to the influence of Labor, there can be little question as to where the origin of the Unemployed Bill should be sought. It may be remembered that last autumn, when there was every prospect of a winter of exceptional distress, Mr. Long, then the President of the Local Government Board, made an attempt to unify and bring into cooperation all the agencies of charitable relief in London. In each of the twenty-eight boroughs into which London is divided, a joint Committee was formed from the local Borough Council and the local Board of Guardians to work in consultation and harmony with the parochial and charitable associations of the neighborhood. Thus a unity of aim and method was secured in each district. The next step was to apply the same principle of unification to all the districts. This was done by the creation of a Central Committee which undertook a general work of direction, supervision and allocation of the funds that were raised by voluntary subscriptions. The scheme worked on the whole fairly well, though it was greatly hampered by the refusal of some of the wealthier Borough Councils to contribute. The present Bill proposes, in effect, to make what was provisional and

voluntary in the scheme permanent and statutory. The local committees are to be permanent bodies, and the Central Committee likewise is to be permanent. The Central Committee will have power to levy a rate of one halfpenny in the pound—rising by special permission of the Local Government Board to one penny—over the whole administrative area of London. As a penny in the pound yields about \$900,000, it will be seen that there is nothing to prevent the proposed Central Authority from spending something like \$450,000 a year in the relief of the unemployed. The duty of the local bodies will be that of sorting over the applications, dividing the genuine unemployed from the unemployable, and doing what they can to *find* work for the former. The Central Authority alone will be empowered to *provide* work, and the only kind of work it will be permitted to provide will be work on a farm colony.

Such, in brief, is the scheme. It has one vital defect. While the provisions of the Bill are compulsory in London, they are optional outside of London. Thus London will be compelled to start special machinery for dealing with the unemployed, with special rating powers, but neither the County nor the Borough Councils in the provinces would be obliged to follow suit. That could only mean in practice that London would become a magnet to draw all the unemployed, all the unemployable, all the tramps and wastrels in the kingdom. They will flock in thousands to the metropolis to get a share in the good things going, and convert London into a clearing-house of all the destitution and most of the rescality in the whole country. If the Bill is to become law at all, it is argued, it must be made equally operative throughout the kingdom, and each administrative area must be compelled to provide for its own unemployed. But it is not on this point alone that the Bill is attacked. The restriction to a halfpenny and even a penny rate is denounced as wholly futile, and the idea of confining all the employment provided to work on a farm colony is scouted as impracticable. Once it is admitted that the unemployed have a right to look to the community for work, then work will have to be found for them at whatever cost, and as the vast majority of the unemployed are unskilled urban laborers of almost every trade and occupation except agriculture, it is clear that a farm colony will scarcely meet their needs. I need scarcely say that the whole principle of the measure—that

it is the duty of the community to provide work for the temporarily unemployed—is an entirely novel one in English legislation; that it is fiercely disputed; that it is still more fiercely disputed because the Bill does not propose to disfranchise those who accept the employment thus offered; and that there are many who believe that, if it is ever carried into effect, the Bill will not only create paupers, but prevent them from being anything else but paupers.

There is, however, one party that heartily accepts it and is only concerned in strengthening and extending its application. That is the Independent Labor Party. That this party is the nucleus of what will one day prove a mighty organization must, I think, be evident to all observers of English politics. It is, therefore, interesting to consider the main lines of its policy as laid down a few days ago at its annual meeting. The delegates present passed resolutions in favor of providing free meals for school children and of giving municipalities power to undertake such enterprises as the public supply of coal, bread, milk and dairy and farm produce. Other resolutions condemned the Chinese Labor Ordinance, the treatment of Post-Office and other Government employees, and the War-Office mismanagement of contracts in South Africa. Besides this, the Independent Labor Party declared for a complete scheme of decentralization (including, of course, Home Rule), for the payment of Members of Parliament, for adult suffrage for both sexes, for local control of the drink traffic and for a national treatment of the unemployed question. These, however, are the stock items on every Labor programme. But what was really novel in the proceedings of the Independent Labor Party was the contempt it showed for official Liberalism. It adopted a motion forbidding members of the Party to speak under the auspices of the Free-Trade League, not because Labor favors Protection, but because Labor is determined not to be merged in Liberalism, but to play the old Nationalist game of complete independence, tempered by occasional alliances for particular objects. That is a significant sign of the times. There is, indeed, no question of English politics more momentous than the future relations between Liberalism and Labor. Trade-Unionism, which in theory is the antithesis of Socialism, is developing on Socialist lines; the proletariat is just beginning to show some consciousness of its political power and

of the strength that organization brings; the next Liberal Cabinet will undoubtedly contain at least one representative of Labor; and though the Labor men in the House of Commons are few, have no real leader and show none of the Irish instinct for Parliamentary warfare, they command an immense following in the country, and are, I believe, destined to prove the controlling element in the new Liberalism. Already the municipalities have fallen largely into the hands of the working classes, and their policy and enterprises show a progressive leaning towards Socialism. It cannot be long before Parliament takes a decisive hand in the movement. Compared with that prospect, all the minor incidents of this or any other month—Lord Kitchener's "strike" for a greater official freedom, Mr. Balfour's latest effort to find a platform on which all Tariff Reformers may unite, the chances of a General Election, which some people are confident cannot be postponed beyond June—are merely the happenings of an hour.

ST. PETERSBURG, *May, 1905.*

"TIME and tide wait for one man" would seem to be the maxim according to which 140,000,000 Russians are now being governed; and the one man, although a hereditary ruler, can hardly be said to be a born leader. Neither, unhappily, would he seem to be the friend of those who are. Hence, in the methods of the Government, there is little evidence either of statesmanlike intelligence or set purpose, and ministers pursuing aims which are often mischievous sometimes adopt the only measures calculated to defeat them. Thus one day a step is taken in the direction of popular liberty; another day, a recoil is made towards mediæval absolutism, or, what is more noticeable still, a principle is solemnly laid down by the monarch himself for carrying on the nation's affairs, and his ministers thereupon set about realizing it by means which, far from efficacious, are positively antagonistic. And that is a fair description of the latest phase of the tragedy of cross-purposes from which all Russia is suffering. A number of grievances were bitterly complained of by the press, and nearly all sections of the nation at once supported the demand for their redress. The Emperor, however, publicly stigmatized the would-be reformers as seditious demagogues, denied the existence of the wrongs, the need of reform and also the fact that the

people had any wish for change. But when petition had become remonstrance and remonstrance bordered on revolt, he expressly admitted all that he had previously called in question, generously undertook not only to remove the abuses, but to abolish their causes; and exhorted his subjects, especially pressmen, to assist him in the arduous task. And immediately after that came ministerial circulars, government communications and measures of police repression, all of which ran directly counter to the Tsar's specific promises. That is what was done with the workingmen's demands and with the petitions of the doctors, the zemstvos, the press; and, since my last letter, it has been suddenly and ruthlessly applied to the peasants.

The peasantry constitute about eighty per cent. of the entire population and number over 100,000,000; and the terrible danger of the present situation lies precisely in their suddenly taking things into their own hands and attempting to right their wrongs by force. Agrarian disorders on a large scale would be an appalling scourge. The men who know rural Russia best, experienced members of the zemstvo, like General Kouzmin-Karavayeff, Prince Schakhoffskoy and M. Petrunkevitch, who are in close touch with the mujiks, state with trepidation that, unless very speedy remedial measures are applied, the peasantry may rise and sweep everybody and everything before them, destroying liberals and conservatives, wiping out the good institutions together with the bad, and obliterating every vestige of culture in their way. Such an elemental movement would exceed in destructiveness and horror the *Jacquerie* of the French peasants, who, at the close of the war with England in the middle of the fourteenth century, rose up against the well-to-do people, reduced hundreds of castles to ashes, put noblemen to death with refined accompaniments of bestial cruelty and turned a vast stretch of land into a wilderness of ruins. For the Russian peasants are more numerous than was Jacques Bonhomme, more violent, less amenable to reason.

A picture of the Russian peasant's daily existence, as it really is, would shock the average American and anger those who respect the dignity of manhood. Here is a scene taken exactly as it unfolded itself to the spectators' gaze: The land superior—who is always a magistrate, as well as an administrator—of the Kherson District, wishing to punish a peasant named Shkoda,

sent a summons to him, which was delivered to the man's namesake, V. J. Shkoda. The wrong man consequently left his house and village, appeared before the land superior, explained the mistake and was of course discharged. In spite of this, he was again called on to answer the charge after a couple of weeks had elapsed. He then pleaded that it was all a mistake, a mistake already recognized by the land superior, and that his namesake was probably the person wanted. But the authorities, deaf to his explanations, sent the police to take him by force, and then despatched him, along with criminals, from forwarding prison to forwarding prison in clanking iron chains to the town where the tribunal was situated. And for over three weeks that innocent man was kept in prison awaiting his trial. Brought before the court, the blunder was revealed in a few minutes, and V. J. Shkoda heard the words: "Go back to your hut, you . . . scoundrel; you are not the criminal." The ejaculation was uttered by M. Ingoostoff, the land superior, one of the official class created by Tsar Alexander III to act "as parents towards the helpless peasants." Filial love is not the sentiment which the peasants, no longer quite helpless, cherish towards these "steppe fathers."

Again, the tiller of the soil has far too little land for the needs of himself and his family, and the produce of that little is taxed exorbitantly. On the other hand, he sees round him square miles of excellent black loam or other fertile soil lying fallow. Whose is it? He cares not whether it belongs to a private landowner or the Crown. "The Tsar's?" he replies to those who tell him he must not covet what belongs to the Little Father. "The Tsar's? Well, and we peasants are also the Tsar's. It will be good for us, and for the Tsar, and for everybody, if we turn that fallow land into yellow corn-fields. We don't want to rob the Crown, or the squire, or anybody else. We'll buy it. But let whoever owns it sell it on reasonable terms. But we cannot and will not let it lie fallow for years and years while we are starving for want of bread."

How heavily the burden of taxation weighs upon the husbandman, nobody who has not lived in the country can realize. For there are shades and hues and forms of misery which cannot be painted in words, because the onlooker is himself hardly conscious of them as they pass through his senses and contribute to produce a deep impression on his mind. The official zemstvo data,

however, give one a fair notion of the way in which the Russian husbandman is pinched and pressed, while the intelligent classes are pampered and privileged by the Government. A peasant's family consisting of three persons able to work and of three children pays yearly to the treasury in duty on 12 lbs. of tea, \$5 74; in excise on 1 1-3 stone of sugar, \$3 40; on 108 lbs. of petroleum, 95 cents; for a case of matches, \$1 59; for a jar of vodka, \$6 70; in duty on various articles bought throughout the year, \$2 64; redemption tax for three shares of land, \$23 41; to the clergy, \$13 20; sum total, \$57 63. That is an enormous sum for the family of a peasant to scrape together, even when he spends his winter months working in steel-yards or cotton-mills.

This state of things cannot last; yet the war, with its vast demands, has made it very much worse. The cholera, too, is expected to intensify the fears and aggravate the sufferings of the rural population, and foresighted people announce the coming of a cataclysm.

Russia's best men are become prophets of evil in the hope of doing good. General Kossitch, for example, who for many years was a successful governor of a province and is now commander of the military district of Kazan, stated publicly a few days ago that "agrarian reforms are imperatively needed at once. Unless they are bestowed and without delay, Russia is threatened within a month or two with horrible deeds of blood."

The Tsar has been aware of that danger for some time, and when the impression was still deep he did the best he could to ward it off. Last Christmas day, he issued a Ukase promising full rights to the tillers of the soil "by merging the laws which relate to the peasants in the general legislation of the Empire." Witte thereupon took the matter in hand; his own scheme of agrarian reform, a system marked by simplicity, thoroughness and vitality, was to be embodied in law, and by a stroke of the Imperial pen the peasants were to be freed from the bonds which have continued to hamper them ever since they ceased to be serfs. The work of formulating the measures was being carried on by a special Commission under Witte's guidance. This body had collected, sifted, classified and published the views of the peasants themselves, as well as of the most distinguished specialists—eleven thousand opinions in all. The Commission was about to hold its penultimate meeting to concert measures for enabling the mujiks

to purchase more land; Professor Postnikoff was to read his report on a certain day, and late, very late, the night before, the Commission was dissolved forever by the Tsar.

What had happened was this: The all-powerful head of the Most Holy Synod, Pobiedonostseff, had resolved, for reasons which will appear later on, "to render the Russian Mirabeau harmless." And with the help of the *crème de la crème* of the Autocratic party he succeeded. This party, of which nothing has ever yet been written, is composed of men who include Count S. Scheremetieff, the friend of the Emperor and Empress; Prince Putyatin, the factotum of the Empress; M. Stürmer, a candidate for the Ministry of the Interior, on whose shoulders the mantle of Plehve is supposed to have descended: a landowner of the nobility named Pavloff, who would, if he could, reintroduce the state of serfdom abolished by Alexander II, and several others. One of these persons, whose name it is needless to mention, had the subject of agrarian reform explained at length to the Tsar, and the urgency of adopting energetic measures brought home to him. Thus, His Majesty was informed that the peasants had risen in twelve or more provinces, had burned manor-houses, cut down timber, removed boundaries and taken private land. They had received and distributed proclamations announcing the impending division among the people of lands belonging to the Crown and to private proprietors. And all these lamentable errors of the peasantry were, it was alleged, the work of Witte, and could be stopped only by removing the entire question from his care and dissolving the special Commission of which he was the President.

The Tsar was naturally alarmed, and the spokesman of the clique took care to intensify his apprehensions. Haste, he urged, was peremptory; the symptoms must be treated like an incipient conflagration. And His Majesty assented. After a lively discussion, the conspirators carried their point and got Nicholas II to act. A special messenger was despatched to St. Petersburg to inform all whom it might concern of his Majesty's orders, and to have the disintegrating Ukase of April 12th printed. And, quite unexpectedly, S. Y. Witte, the President of His Majesty's Committee of Ministers, and Chairman of the Special Commission for the study of the needs of the peasants, learned that he had been dismissed from the chairmanship of this latter body, and

that the Commission itself had been dissolved; on the other hand, ex-Minister Goremykin, a bland nonentity, was surprised to find himself gazetted as the chairman of a new agrarian commission which would be created a few days later and would begin its studies *da capo*. S. Y. Witte was, it is alleged, "greatly displeased," and there would seem to be some grounds for the statement. He had served the Tsar devotedly and well. The war, dear to the heart of the Emperor, was being waged on the money hoarded by Witte. Yet that Minister had been publicly slighted in a way which an English maid-of-all-work would vigorously resent. As for the peasants, they were informed that landed property would be safeguarded from every design upon it, and that all the men of a village would be held jointly responsible for damage done.

Many loyal Russians regret that the Tsar should deal so autocratically with his one statesman, his many ministers and his countless people. That the ex-Finance Minister should be harshly dealt with is, perhaps, unimportant. He is only a statesman. The other advisers whom the Tsar himself called to his Council might have been consulted on the subject with profit. The disregard with which they were treated two years ago led unavoidably to the war with Japan; and the contempt now displayed towards them may lead to a civil war of a much more terrible character. As for the people, who have never been treated differently, they are not surprised, but only impatient at it all, having ceased to believe in ukases, rescripts and manifestoes. But their impatience is the most dangerous element in the situation.

Witte, too, is deemed a disturbing factor in the Russian Empire, and the policy of the whole Tsardom is modified just to anger him. He is President of the *Committee* of Ministers and would, it is rumored, gladly resign if he dared, but he is not allowed to go. However that may be, it is certain that, in order to avoid coming into contact with him, the Tsar transferred the questions in which he was himself interested to another slightly different body, the *Council* of Ministers, under his own Presidency, making Count Solsky Vice-President. Merely to shun Witte! And now eighty per cent. of the population of Russia have been either condemned to suffer indefinitely or stung to aggression against the other twenty per cent. of the population, in order solely that Witte might be humiliated. The American

reader may get a clearer idea of how suddenly, secretly and vigorously the court conspiracy was hatched and carried out, when he is told that none of the Tsar's Ministers was consulted or even informed of what was going on behind their backs. The accomplished fact was sprung upon them all without warning. Even the Grand-Duke Alexander Mikhailovitch—nay, the Tsar himself—had no suspicion of what was coming. For on Wednesday, April 12th, there was an important sitting of the Commission, and it was settled that there would be another on the following Saturday. As late as Thursday at noon, the Tsar sent to the Privy Councillor Shipoff, the Secretary of the Commission, an imperial ukase appointing the Grand-Duke Alexander Mikhailovitch to be a member of the Commission. Two hours later, however, Shipoff received another ukase dissolving the Commission, scattering its labors to the four winds of heaven, and chastising Witte for—the sake of a court clique.

Thus the Russian peasants are being trifled with, just as the Japanese Government was played with by the Autocracy shortly before the war. From day to day, from month to month, the Mikado's Ambassador, Baron Kurino, was put off, now on one frivolous pretext, now on another, until one day he presented a note breaking off the "futile negotiations," and transferring the issues to the battle-field.

Something analogous bids fair to occur in the interior of Russia. The whole system by which the peasants are, so to say, drugged, blinded and enslaved has been condemned by the zemstvos, the nobility, the professors and the journalists—in a word, by all Russia. Then the Tsar himself unwillingly but solemnly endorsed the view of his people, and condemned the system utterly. Yet he will not allow something better to be put in its place, although he even cannot preserve the old edifice now. It is tottering to its foundations. Shortly, there will be nothing left of it: but neither will there be anything set up in its place, because all serious efforts to build up another system are being thwarted, and thwarted by court conspirators who, in the Tsar's own palace, scheme in his name and with his assent, but assuredly not to his advantage.

The story of Church reform, which is typical, ought to be fairly well known by now. Like every other liberal reform, its history is bound up with Witte, who strove to embody, not indeed

liberty of conscience, but the principles of mild toleration, in a number of propositions which were to be afterwards formulated by lawyers and entered on the Statute Book. The gist of them is that members of the Orthodox Church, who, down to last Easter Sunday, could not forsake their creed with impunity, may do so in future provided that they join a Christian sect. The necessary sequel to this and kindred innovations was a reform of the government of the Orthodox Church itself, which, so long as it remains the mere handmaid of the State, cannot compete with any of the great religious communities, all of which are free. Therefore, Orthodoxy ought to be ruled by its own members, and not by the civil functionaries; and Witte, having made this quite clear to the Tsar, was requested by him to draw up a scheme of reform for the Orthodox fold. The statesman willingly accepted the task, and discharged it rapidly and well, proposing mainly two measures: first, that the State should remove its heavy hand from Orthodoxy, and, secondly, that a purely ecclesiastical council be convened to discuss the needs of the Church and the ways and means of satisfying them.

The Tsar was ready to approve both these reforms, when Constantine P. Pobiedonostseff, then ill, heard of the latter scheme, besought the Most High to frustrate it, and then proceeded to hear his own prayer. He went cautiously to work, not disapproving what was done, but rather encouraging those ecclesiastics who were minded to go farther—and they went farther, too far, indeed, just as he had expected them to do. They asked for the restoration of the Patriarchate of the whole Russian Church—a dignity which has not existed since the days of Peter the Great; and they requested the Tsar to summon a council without delay to elect the dignitary. Then the “wily old Jesuit of Orthodoxy,” who had signed his own name together with those of the bishops, wrote to his Imperial master strongly advising him not to accede to the hasty, injudicious and dangerously radical demands of the episcopate. The bishops and archbishops who to-day wanted a Patriarch might, perhaps, to-morrow ask for a republic. Nicholas II, alarmed, promulgated a short, sharp refusal. Orthodoxy was to remain dragged down by her secular fetters and gyves. Sectarianism, too? people asked. Assuredly, men answered; for were it otherwise, if the penal laws were to be abolished which keep the sects from decimating the ranks of Orthodoxy, the con-

dition of the State Church would become critical and alarming. And as the Tsar will do nothing to harm his own Church, they argued, both projects drafted by Witte will be shelved.

But, on Easter Sunday, an Imperial ukase was published, striking the fetters off the sectarians, and leaving the Orthodox Christians bound to the State like the wretched criminals whom Mezentius had strapped to a corpse. Henceforth non-conformists can freely convoke their own councils when they like, appoint their worthiest clerics to archiepiscopal and episcopal sees, and take all other measures which they deem necessary for the welfare of their religious community. But two or three bishops of the Orthodox Church may not assemble anywhere, without the permission of one civil functionary, and the presence of another during their discussion. It is one of these civil servants, and not the Church, who appoints dignitaries and removes them. In like manner, important sermons cannot be delivered, in any Orthodox cathedral, which have not first been read and approved.

But, after all, the mistakes made by the Autocracy in the ecclesiastical sphere will not profoundly influence the affairs of this world. Hence they are interesting chiefly as symptoms. They show that not only statesmanship which is a genuine luxury, but average intelligence and will which are primary necessities, of good government are absent from the administration of the Tsardom, and that the vast Slav nation of 140,000,000 is governed by fitful vagaries. Whether, as many Russians reluctantly believe, one of the results of this arbitrary misrule will be a tremendous upheaval by the peasant Enceladus, a catastrophe which will leave traces on all future stages of culture, and give its name to all civilized languages, time alone can say. *Qui vivra verra.*

ROME, May, 1905.

"I AM convinced that not only with regard to the railway employees, but in all and in every branch of the Administration, the authority of the State needs to be strengthened, and this is what I intend to accomplish; but it is not the work of a day, as we can take only a step at a time." This statement, made before the Senate by Signor Fortis, the new Premier, shortly after he had assumed power and while the railway strike was going on, is sufficiently eloquent to give, at one and the same time, an idea of

the internal situation in Italy, and of the programme of the new Cabinet. It is, in other words, a repetition of what half a century ago Massimo D'Azeglio, patriot, novelist, painter and politician, who was Premier under the great Victor Emanuel, said: "Now that Italy is made, we must make the Italians." The two statements mean that, although twenty-five years were spent in the struggle for the unity and independence of Italy, and thirty-five more have passed since the taking of Rome, such a period is totally inadequate to make those who govern and the people, morally, intellectually and politically, equal to the new conditions of their country.

In less than fifty years, Italy had to do what other nations accomplished gradually in the course of centuries; so, notwithstanding all possible energy in the rulers and the bearing of heavy burdens under the form of taxation by the people, the means have not always been sufficient to reach the proposed aim. She was almost totally without modern ways of communication; in many parts of the south, the rivers were without bridges; and the only means of conveyance were carts drawn by oxen, nor were any diligences as yet running. To repair such a deplorable state of things, 10,000 miles of railway were built, which are still insufficient. Compared with the area of the country, Italy has, in fact, only about one-half of the mileage of the lines of other European nations, and only one-third of those of Belgium, not counting, of course, Russia, Spain, Portugal and the Balkans, which are still more backward in this respect. This state of inferiority, together with the large amount spent in a short time to build the network of railways, has hampered their activity, so that they still represent a deficit of \$28,000,000 yearly. Notwithstanding this, the railway employees, although not paid as much as abroad, may be called, considering the average wage in Italy, one of the comparatively well-to-do classes. However, taking advantage of their organization, of the indispensability of their services, and of the serious damage which results from a suspension of railway traffic, they have constantly succeeded in obtaining further advantages, the last and most important having been that secured in 1902, when Government and companies granted an appropriation in their favor of 4,000,000 dollars to be spread over three years, to be increased later to 3,600,000 dollars yearly.

Encouraged by this success, the railwaymen thought themselves

invincible, and scarcely three years had passed when they demanded new and more important concessions, directed chiefly to an increase of their pay, amounting to 20,000,000 dollars, and the acknowledgment of their right to combine and to strike. In their agitation they were pushed and supported by all the subversive elements, especially by the revolutionist section of the Socialists, who wished to take their revenge for the complete fiasco of the attempt at a general strike last September. In this movement they despised the advice to be moderate which came from the most enlightened men even of the extreme parties, and assumed an attitude of open defiance of the authority and power of the State, and of the interests of almost all classes of citizens, including those whom they desired to have as allies in a general strike. They entirely mistook the situation and the conditions they had to contend with. The general election, to which Signor Giolitti had the ability to have recourse immediately after the excesses in the attempt at a general strike, returned a Chamber more conservative than the former, whilst the people remained adverse to any efforts to disturb public order. These conditions, in which the railway strike was prepared and proclaimed, even influenced about one-third of the railwaymen themselves, who did not abandon their work; while Parliament passed the bill for the resumption of the railways by the State, almost without discussion, including the articles forbidding strikes and punishing strikers, which under normal conditions would not have been approved, on the ground that it would prove of no practical utility. All the other classes of workmen refused to join the railwaymen in a general strike, so that the latter resumed work just at the time at which Parliament approved the very bill for the presentation of which they had struck.

The same unpreparedness may be noticed in foreign policy, in which, however, Italy has acquired lately greater weight, due partly to her position, partly to events independent of herself. Even the Papacy, that during the Pontificates of Pius IX and Leo XIII was depicted as the "internal enemy," has been made use of to the advantage of present institutions, as although the statement made in the November number of the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* was denied—that the meeting between Signor Giolitti and Count von Bülow at Homburg had also the object of obtaining, through the influence of Germany, that the Holy See should

tacitly allow the Italian Clericals to participate in political contests—it is a fact that the Clericals, for the first time since 1870, not only voted, but even elected some of their representatives, while the choosing of a considerable number of candidates was discussed, through intermediaries, between the Government and the Church authorities. The result was the election of a Chamber which is the most conservative we have had, since the Conservatives, for the first time, went out of power in 1876, and which will certainly strengthen the tendency in favor of Italy's remaining bound to the Triple Alliance, which, in the eyes of the less Liberal elements, is not only a feature of our foreign policy, but also a guarantee against too democratic internal movements. Still what a difference between the situation at the beginning of the Triple Alliance, when Italy, fearing an attack from France, had to make advances to be admitted, and now, when she is implored to remain! And what a difference also in the conditions to be fulfilled by the Peninsula! When Marquis di Rudinì renewed the alliance in 1891 Italy pledged herself, in case France should attack Germany, to send two divisions of troops, through the Tyrol, to fight on the Franco-German frontier. Any such condition was suppressed in the last renewal of the Alliance, in 1902, which contains no clause that may sound hostile to France or to any other country. The weak point of the Alliance is the relations between Italy and Austria, and this is why the meeting at Venice, on April 29th, between Count Goluchowski and Senator Tittoni, aroused so much interest. The dislike of Austria is innate in all Italians, and is kept alive by Austria still holding two Italian provinces, Trent and Triest, and by her continuing there the system which led to the loss of the Lombardo Venetian provinces—that is to say, doing all in her power to suppress the Italian sympathies and nationality of the inhabitants, obtaining, however, as is only natural, the contrary effect, besides fostering the “irredentist” sentiment in Italy. She has constantly tried to Germanize the province of Trent; while, as for Triest, after having completely failed in the same attempt, she is now endeavoring to make it Slav. In reality, nothing has helped so much the unity of Italy as the attitude of Austria.

The problem which now remains urgent and important for the Peninsula is the defence of her interests in the seas which surround her, by preventing any further extension of the great

Powers along the Eastern coast of the Adriatic or in the Balkans, and by claiming that no other country but herself should succeed Turkey in Tripoli. Of course, the first part of this programme is entirely directed against Austria, or, at least, it is entirely with Austria that it has to be understood and settled. There was a period, during the existence of the Zanardelli Cabinet, in which Italy during the revival of irredentism, assumed almost an aggressive attitude against her ally, in view of the alleged intention of Austria to occupy the district of Novi Bazar, near the Servian frontier. Then the Italian grand manoeuvres were purposely held near the Austrian frontier, and directed personally by King Victor Emanuel III, amidst such fiery enthusiasm that it recalled to the old veterans the days of 1848, in the first war against Austria. Contemporaneously, it was hinted that General Ricciotti Garibaldi, the only surviving son of the great hero, was ready with 10,000 volunteers for a dash on the coast of Istria, or into the mountains of the Tyrol, repeating the exploits of his father in 1866. Austria answered by massing 30,000 men on the Italian frontier, and out of all this came the first meeting between Senator Tittoni and Count Goluchowski at Abbazia, where the discussion led to the conclusion that Austria, although authorized by the Treaty of Berlin, would not occupy Novi Bazar, whilst Italy would not attempt anything against her neighbor. The meeting at Venice has completed the understanding between the two countries with regard to the whole Eastern question, in which Italy has gradually attracted into her sphere of influence Montenegro, Servia and Bulgaria. With regard to Albania, the coast of which is within sight of that of Italy, an understanding exists, initiated by Marquis Visconti Venosta and completed by Signor Prinetti, for the maintenance of the *status quo*. In Macedonia, Russia being distracted by the war with Japan, Austria had been acquiring too great preponderance, so that Italy has supported the proposition of England to extend the intervention of the other Powers to the finances of that region, whilst until now they had only participated in the reorganization of the gendarmerie, under the direction of the Italian General di Giorgis. Finally, another question which is again becoming urgent is that of Crete, in which Italy has a prominent part, as the International Committee deciding all Cretan affairs sits in Rome, under the Presidency of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In the Mediterranean there is only one region left where Italian expansion is possible, viz., Tripoli, which Italy considers it vital for her own interests should not fall into the hands of any other nation, as otherwise she would be, as they say here, suffocated in her own seas.

In 1901, Italy and France, coming to an understanding with regard to their reciprocal interests in the Mediterranean, agreed that the Peninsula should put forward no claims on Morocco, while France took the same pledge with regard to Tripoli, about the *hinterland* of which England and France had already concluded a convention on March 21, 1899. Therefore, Tripoli is the only spot left to Italy for an opening on the Mediterranean into the African Continent. But how will she get it? Considering her present relations with France and England, which are chiefly interested in the Mediterranean, and her position as member of the Triple Alliance, she would now meet with no opposition from any of the Powers, if, on a pretext which it would not be difficult to create, she should send a force to occupy Tripoli. Of course, Turkey would not only protest, but would make a desperate effort to defend the last vestige of her conquests in Africa. An armed conflict would thus necessarily ensue, which is just what the ruling classes in Italy wish to avoid, knowing how much the people, since the unfortunate war with Abyssinia in 1896, are opposed to any colonial enterprises, which have to be carried out by military operations. Italy's ideal would be not to occupy Tripoli at all, if she could have the certainty that no other Power would go there. This certainty being impossible, and Italy desiring not to have recourse to a military occupation except in an extreme case, the tendency now prevailing is to go to Tripoli not only in accord with the other Powers, but even with the consent of Turkey herself. Negotiations in this sense have been initiated, and are still proceeding, with the Porte, Italy proposing to convert Tripoli into a centre for some of her emigrants who amount to 500,000 a year, and to take over a portion of the administration of that region to insure the emigrants the safety of their lives and property and equitable justice, but maintaining intact the sovereignty of the Sultan.

In this way, without eliminating Turkey, Italy would be so established in Tripoli as to render its occupation by any other Power impossible.

WASHINGTON, *May, 1905.*

THE topics of chief importance from a national view-point that have been discussed in the Federal capital during the month of May have been—aside from the Loomis-Bowen affair, that, conceivably, might affect the reputation of our diplomatic representatives abroad—the President's avowed determination to insist upon clothing the Interstate Commerce Commission with power to regulate railway rates, in spite of the adverse position which the Senate Committee, headed by Mr. Elkins, has seemed inclined to take; and, secondly, his firm support of Secretary Taft in the declared intention to buy all supplies needed for the Panama Canal in the cheapest market, a declaration which seems likely to arouse strenuous opposition on the part of the "Stand Patters," as the inflexible upholders of the Dingley Tariff are called. The questions involved in the Bowen-Loomis controversy are, obviously, three. First, Are the charges brought against the First Assistant Secretary of State well founded? Secondly, Whether the charges were, on their face, justified or not, was Minister Bowen responsible for their publication in newspapers? Lastly, was Mr. Bowen simply performing a public duty, or was he aiming to gratify a private grudge, when he twice laid these charges before the State Department? The third inquiry may be quickly answered. Of course, a Minister is not expected to let personal animosity tinge his correspondence with the Secretary of State, or even to repeat to his official superior frivolous gossip that may be circulated in a foreign capital about his predecessor. If, on the other hand, the charges are serious, he is plainly bound to report them to the State Department. The second inquiry, also, need not detain us long. A Minister's whole duty is performed when he makes charges known confidentially to the Secretary of State. It, evidently, is not his business to comment on them in private conversation with foreigners, while, as yet, his official superior has reached no decision on the matter. To go further, and instigate the publication of the charges in newspapers, would be a gross breach of decorum, for which the only adequate punishment would be dismissal from our diplomatic service.

That the charges are serious there is no dispute, and it may be that Mr. Bowen can prove that he is guiltless of discussing them in private conversation, much less of revealing them to the public in advance of an official scrutiny. In that event, he will deserve

to retain the confidence of the Federal Executive; and, although he will not be sent back to Caracas, where he is known not to be *persona grata*, he will doubtless be transferred to some other honorable post. The question of grave importance to Mr. Loomis is whether the charges, which have unquestionably been current in Venezuela, have any solid foundation. There has been a widespread impression that the accusations were thoroughly investigated and dismissed by the President himself some time ago, when they were first communicated by Mr. Bowen. It is now asserted that the investigation was not thorough, but that the President confined himself to asking an officer of the Asphalt Trust, Mr. Avery D. Andrews, who had served with him as a member of the New York Police Board under Mayor Strong, whether his Company had ever given any money to Mr. Loomis when the latter was United States Minister at Caracas. Mr. Andrews is said to have replied in the negative, explaining that, for convenience in the matter of exchange, Mr. Loomis had merely exchanged checks with the Trust. Thereupon the President dropped the subject, and the rebuke to Minister Bowen followed. Subsequently, Mr. Bowen again reported the charges, but the State Department took no notice of them. The publication of them in newspapers ensued. For that publication, however, Mr. Bowen repudiates any responsibility. He further asserts that from the documents in the case, forwarded by him and presumed to be in the archives of the State Department, two of the most material are missing. One of these was a letter from President Castro to Mr. Loomis, and the other was an "assignment" made by Mr. Loomis to another man. It seems that Mr. Bowen brought with him from Caracas duplicate copies of the missing documents, and that he has been permitted by Judge Taft, who, it is well known, is acting as Secretary of State in Mr. Hay's absence, to put them in evidence. The outcome of the controversy is uncertain at the hour when we write, though we may take it for granted that, if Mr. Loomis succeeds in proving his innocence, the wrong of which he has been the victim will be redressed by promotion in the Government service.

When our last article was penned, it was evident that the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce, over which Mr. Elkins presides, and which has been for some time sitting in Washington, had been pretty well convinced by the representatives of the rail-

ways that any such legislation as is projected in the Esch-Townsend bill is superfluous, and that nothing is needed to safeguard the interests of shippers against unfair discrimination beyond the zealous enforcement of existing laws by the Interstate Commerce Commission. At that time the President had not been heard from, for he was still engaged in hunting bears in Colorado. Scarcely had he emerged, however, from the wilderness when he announced, in a public speech, the purpose of adhering to the policy embodied in the Esch-Townsend bill. The purpose of the Administration was subsequently reiterated by Secretary Taft at the banquet of the International Railway Congress in Washington. The latter utterance was the more noteworthy because Mr. Stuyvesant Fish, who presided, had argued that the railroads were private property, that their owners had vested rights, and that those rights would be encroached upon unfairly, if the power to fix rates, or, in other words, the prices at which services were to be sold, were delegated to agents of the Federal Government. Judge Taft replied that, while railways are, in a sense, private property, the courts have always recognized that they are created for public purposes, which must, above all things, be subserved. He added that, inasmuch as the commerce of the country must be carried on over their lines, and because, in the nature of the case, there cannot be such full and free competition between railways as between manufacturers or merchants, no enlightened nation permits railroads to be managed as though they were exclusively private enterprises. The Secretary of War did not advocate the creation of a Government Board or Commission, authorized to fix in advance the tariffs of all interstate railways; but he did maintain that, where a particular rate is denounced by shippers as unreasonable, and is so held by the courts, the determination of what rate would be a fair one is practically inseparable from the decision that the rate complained of is unreasonable. What the Secretary demanded was what the President had previously called for—namely, a means of making immediately effective the Commission's decision that a specific rate is unreasonable, though he acknowledged that this decision should be subject to review by a court. This, of course, is a proposal very different from the assertion that the Interstate Commission should be authorized to fix rates generally; yet the President, speaking at Denver, warned his hearers that even this limited judicial func-

tion should be exercised by the Commission with great caution, and with due regard to the rights of railway shareholders, who, he called to mind, have lost hundreds of millions of dollars in constructing railways that did not pay. Mr. Roosevelt also cautioned his Denver audience against attacking railway companies on the ground that they are rich, or in a spirit of populism or socialism. The community at large, he said, should not overlook such rights of private ownership as the shareholders and bondholders in railway properties undoubtedly possess. Judge Taft also made it evident to the representatives of railways, with whom he foregathered at Washington, that he spoke as a friend when he suggested that they should acquiesce in some such measure of supervision as is embodied in the Esch-Townsend bill, lest worse should befall them at the hands of exasperated voters.

Though the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee, which has been examining the question, may report against the adoption of the Esch-Townsend bill, it is likely to suggest a substitute and will shrink from an attempt to organize the Republican majority in the Upper House of the Federal Legislature in defiant opposition to Mr. Roosevelt's railway policy. It is by no means certain that such an attempt would succeed even in that body. Many Western Senators are known to approve of the President's position on this question, and it may well happen that others will be instructed by their State Legislatures to support him. We can see no reason, either, why all Democrats in the Senate should not take a similar stand, as their political *confrères* did in the last House of Representatives. Apparently, no change has occurred in the views of Mr. Williams, the leader of the Democratic minority in the Lower House, or in those of Mr. William J. Bryan and other authoritative spokesmen of Democratic sentiment. The current of public opinion is flowing quite as strongly in favor of Mr. Roosevelt's railway programme as it flowed last winter, and it may be well for recalcitrant Senators to remember that the President will again have an opportunity of appealing to the voters, when he makes his Southern tour which is expected to precede the convening of the Fifty-ninth Congress on October 10th, the date now understood to have been fixed upon.

The friends of railway corporations are few compared with the champions of the Dingley Tariff. Even the members of the Cabinet are said to be divided regarding the expediency of carry-

ing out the plan proposed by the Secretary of War and approved by the President—the plan, namely, of purchasing the supplies needed by the Panama Canal Commission in the cheapest market, which, as it happens, would generally mean a foreign market. Judge Taft deems it his plain duty to act upon this principle, inasmuch as the Fifty-eighth Congress, though requested, omitted to legislate on the subject, and seems, therefore, deliberately to have left the matter to the Secretary's discretion. We presume, however, that no court of equity would hold that the Secretary's discretion would permit him to pay more for the Commission's supplies than he needs to pay. Such wastefulness would be especially inexcusable at this time when the Federal revenues already fall considerably short of meeting expenditures. Under the circumstances, Judge Taft would rightly feel it to be iniquitous for him to buy steam-engines, for example, directly from the American manufacturers, when those manufacturers are offering precisely similar engines in Europe at a greatly reduced price. How could he expect his accounts to be audited, if, without any positive mandate from Congress, he insisted upon putting in the pockets of American manufacturers the difference, often a wide one, between their home prices and their foreign prices for the same article? If the Fifty-ninth Congress choose to make American manufacturers a present of the people's money, let it do so openly, and shoulder the responsibility. That is an alternative which the "Stand Patters" would prefer not to confront. They would have liked the Canal Commission to buy quietly all of its supplies in the United States, and thus, while "keeping good money at home," avert any public ventilation of the subject. In view, however, of the upright and resolute position taken by Secretary Taft, with Mr. Roosevelt's cordial approbation, they will have to face the music, no matter how unwelcome and discordant it may prove. The members of the Cabinet who are said to be much annoyed at the projection of what they deem an inconvenient question into the forum of debate are Secretaries Shaw, Metcalf and Wilson. It is well known that Mr. Shaw has never given countenance to proposals for tariff revision. On the contrary, he has missed no opportunity for giving aid and comfort to the "Stand Patters," and it is no secret that he hopes to become their candidate for the next Republican nomination for the Presidency. It has been taken for granted that,

in furtherance of his aspirations, he would resign from the Cabinet before the next Presidential campaign, to give himself time to organize his canvass. As for his supposed coadjutors, Messrs. Metcalf and Wilson, they possess relatively little influence, personally or politically. On which side Secretary Morton may choose to array himself for the moment is, also, of trivial concern, inasmuch as, since he confessed himself guilty of giving rebates, and thus of violating a Federal statute when he was traffic manager of a railway, his retention of a place in Mr. Roosevelt's Cabinet has been generally pronounced morally indefensible, and his resignation is looked for at an early date. There is no doubt that Attorney-General Moody and Postmaster-General Cortelyou concur with Secretary Taft and the President in considering it the Canal Commission's duty, in the absence of legislation to the contrary, to buy its supplies where it can get them cheapest. The same thing is believed to be true of Secretary Hitchcock, and there is no doubt that Secretary Hay will take a similar position when he returns to Washington. Whether the Fifty-ninth Congress will ever enact a law expressly ordering the Canal Commission to make American manufacturers a free gift of the difference between the prices asked by them at home and the prices they willingly accept abroad for the same commodities, is, to say the least, very doubtful. Such a bill might possibly pass the Senate, which is the stronghold of the high protectionists, and in which the votes of Mr. Gorman, Mr. McEnery and some other Democrats might, conceivably, be secured. But how is it possible that such a preposterous measure could obtain a majority in the next House of Representatives? It is true that Mr. Grosvenor, one of the four engineers of the House machine, has come out flat-footed in favor of the project; but the Republican whip, Representative Tawney, may be counted upon to oppose it, and it is quite possible that, out of deference to the President, a similar position would be taken by Representative Payne. How Speaker Cannon will view the matter is, as yet, unknown; but it is scarcely probable that so sagacious a politician, who has Presidential aspirations of his own, would put himself on record as conniving at what the voters are certain to regard as a "rank steal" from the Treasury. As for the Democrats in the House, they are as likely to support the President on this question as they were to uphold his railway-rate programme in the last Congress.